

14 July 1983

BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA  
BULGARIA

A Soviet journalist charged Thursday that the CIA was behind the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II and "'guided"' the right-wing Turkish group of papal assailant Mehmet Ali Agca.

The statement was issued in response to Western claims that Bulgaria and the Soviets planned the attack against the pontiff.

"The CIA knew about the assassination attempt," the Bulgarian news agency BTA quoted Soviet journalist Yona Andronov as saying in an article published in the Bulgarian Literatures Front of Sofia and the Soviet Literary Gazette.

Andronov, correspondent for the Literary Gazette, investigated the case in Bulgaria, Turkey and West Germany, it said.

"The Grey Wolves, the Turkish Fascist organization to which the assassin Mehmet Ali Agca belongs, is guided by the CIA both in Turkey and Europe," the article said, according to a BTA report from Sofia monitored in Belgrade.

Agca is serving a life term in a Rome jail for shooting the pope May 13, 1981, in St. Peters Square.

Supporting publicly what he said earlier to Italian judges, Agca told reporters last Friday that the Bulgarian secret service and the Soviet KGB planned the assassination.

Agca said Sergei Antonov, a Bulgarian Airlines official in Rome, and two Bulgarian Embassy officials were his accomplices.

Judge Ilario Martella, investigating possible involvement of other countries in the papal shooting, flew from Rome to Sofia for talks with Bulgarian officials.

In a report from Sofia, BTA said Martella was invited to Sofia "'for the establishment of the truth for the non-involvement of Sergei Antonov or any other Bulgarian citizen in the case.'"

Antonov has been in a Rome prison since his arrest last Nov. 25 following allegations by Agca.

BTA said the Literatures Front article said "'the present inhabitants of the White House ... (are) obsessed by the delirious and maniacal idea of a crusade against communism.

"Agca is only an instrument of foreign will and, according to the CIA rules, may possibly not know who are the real perpetrators of the killings.'"

In Rome, a leftist magazine published what it said were telegrams showing the U.S. Embassy in Rome worked out a plan to link Bulgaria to the shooting. U.S. Embassy officials in Rome described the telegrams as "'fabrications.'"

In Washington, the State Department said the KGB apparently forged the cables which were published in the Italian magazine "'Peace and War.'"

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The department released the text of two telegrams which were alleged to have been sent by the U.S. Embassy in Rome in August and December 1982, but which contained mistakes and procedural errors which marked them as forgeries.

"They fit a pattern of KGB forgeries and similar fabrications which the Soviets have been circulating in Europe," State Department spokesman John Hughes said.

"We are not able to prove that it was the KGB, but we are pointing out who has the obvious benefits."